TOMB OF DRACULA
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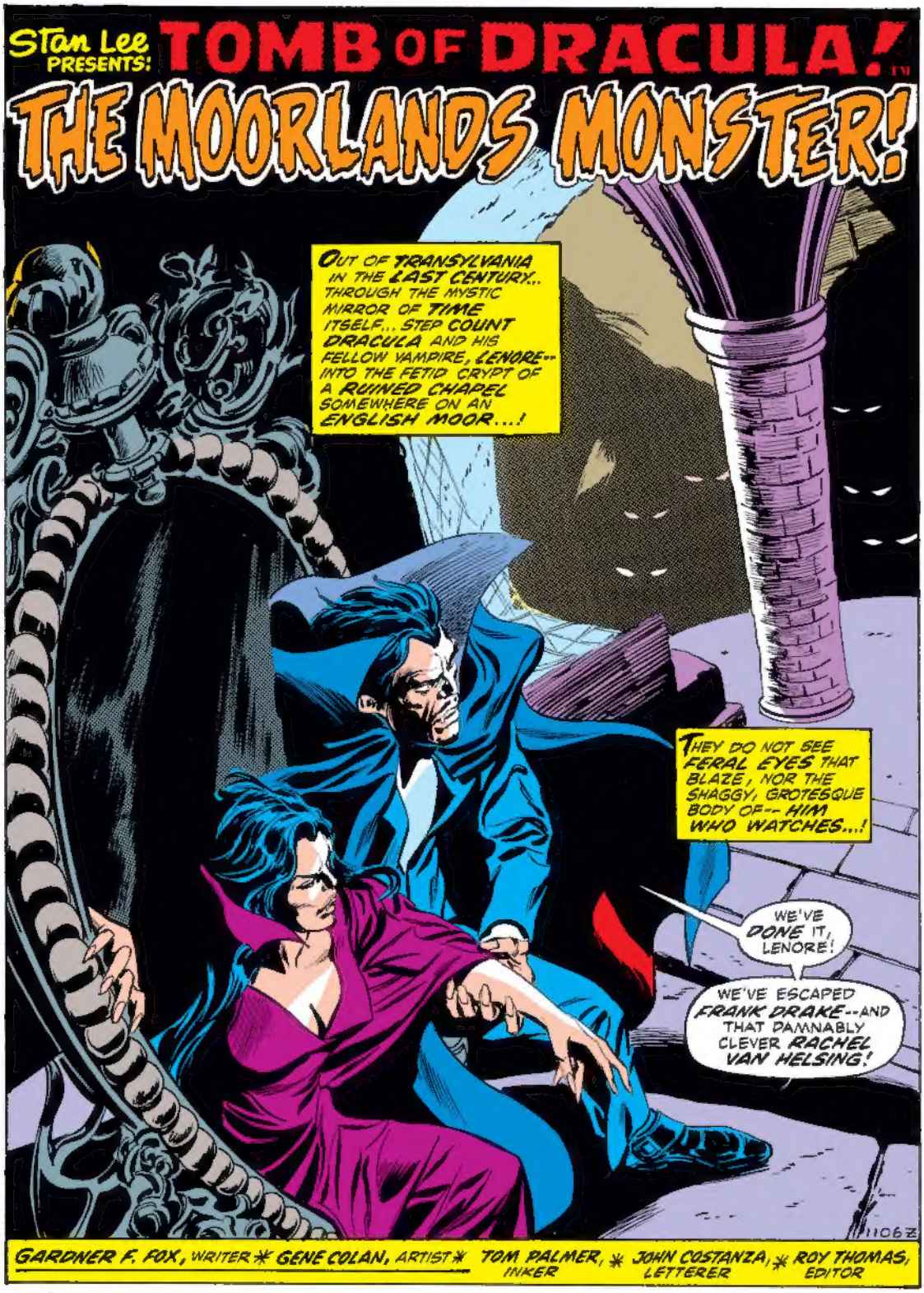
THE TOMB OF DRACULA™
THERE BE THINGS... THAT EVEN A VAMPIRE FEARS!
THE MONSTER OF THE MOORS!


Stan Lee PRESENTS:
TOMB OF DRACULA!™
THE MOORLANDS MONSTER!
OUT OF TRANSYLVANIA IN THE LAST CENTURY.. THROUGH THE MYSTIC MIRROR OF TIME ITSELF... STEP COUNT DRACULA AND HIS FELLOW VAMPIRE, LENORE-- INTO THE FETID CRYPT OF A RUINED CHAPEL SOMEWHERE ON AN ENGLISH MOOR...!
THEY DO NOT SEE FERAL EYES THAT BLAZE, NOR THE SHAGGY, GROTESQUE BODY OF-- HIM WHO WATCHES...!
WE'VE DONE IT, LENORE!
WE'VE ESCAPED FRANK DRAKE--AND THAT DAMNABLY CLEVER RACHEL VAN HELSING!
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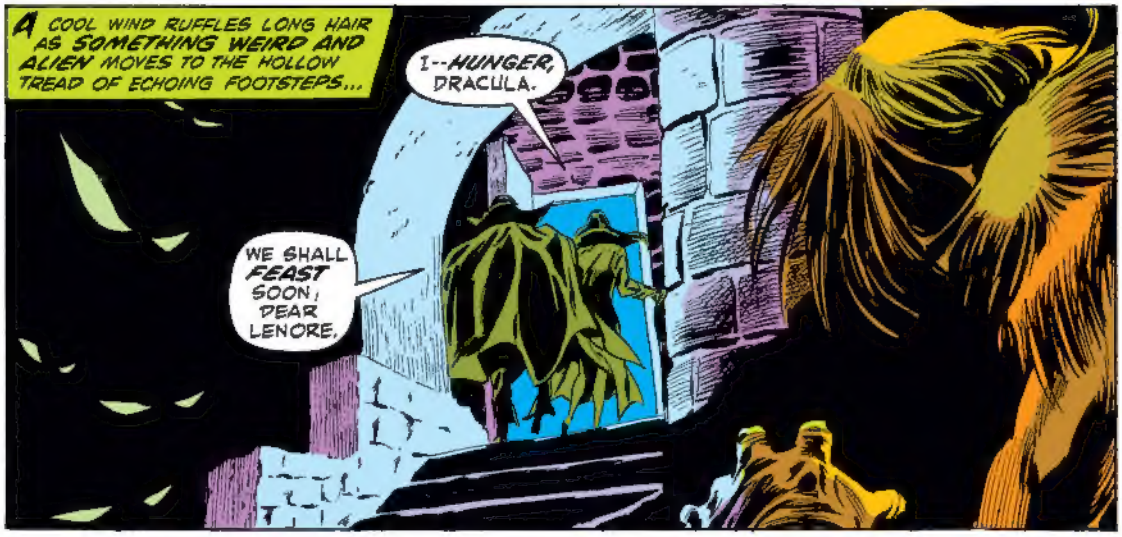
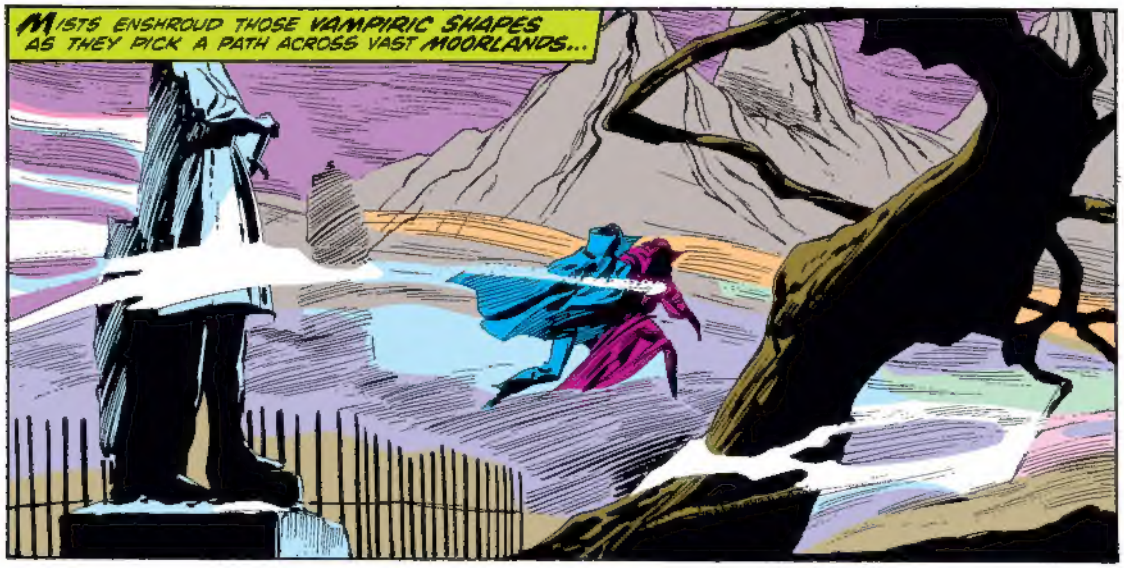
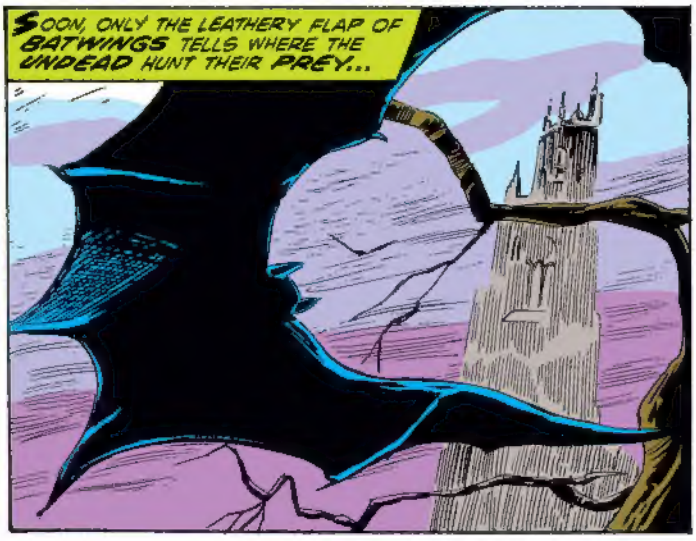
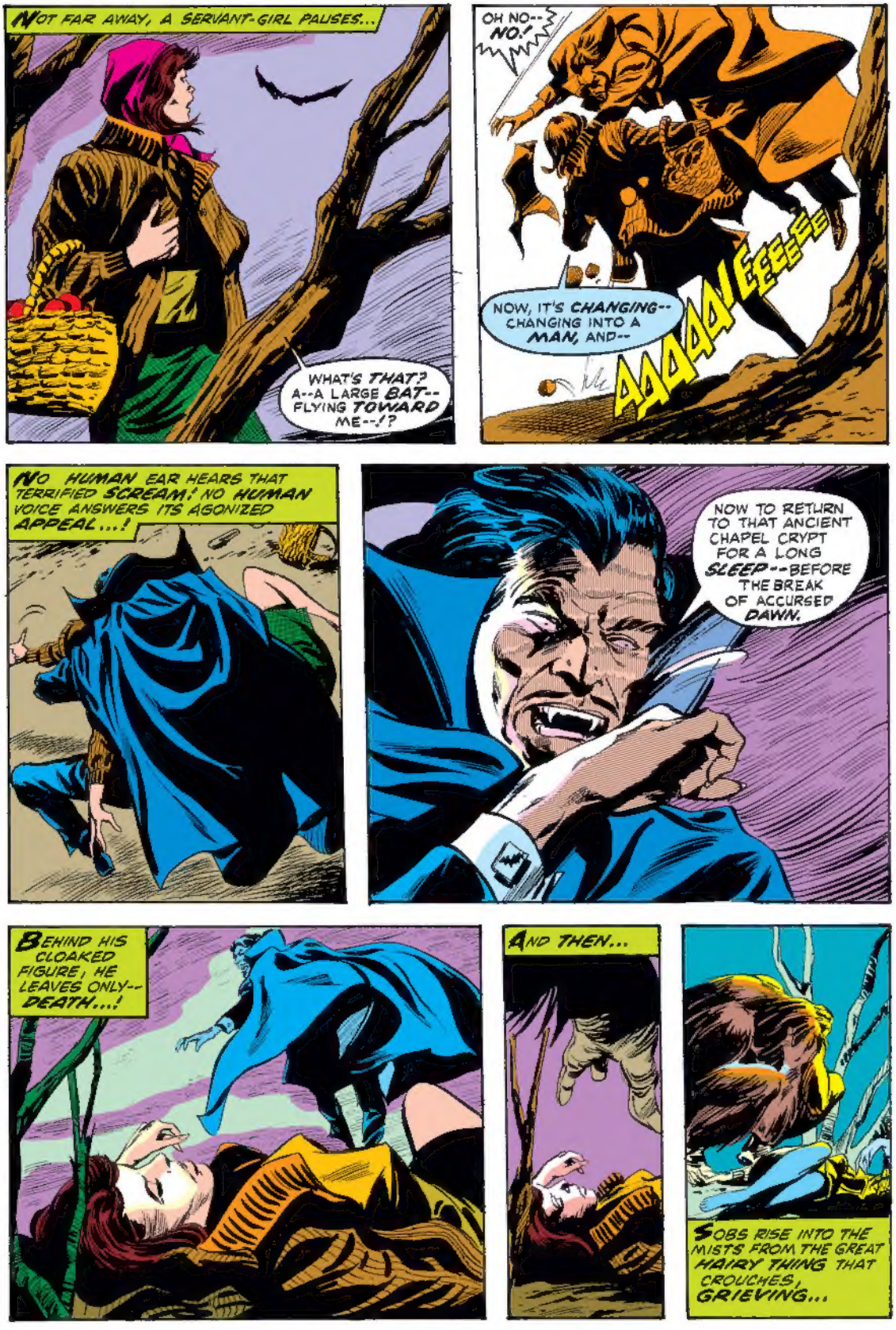
GARDNER F. FOX, WRITER ✱ GENE COLAN, ARTIST ✱ TOM PALMER, INKER ✱ JOHN COSTANZA, LETTERER ✱ ROY THOMAS, EDITOR


A COOL WIND RUFFLES LONG HAIR AS SOMETHING WEIRD AND ALIEN MOVES TO THE HOLLOW TREAD OF ECHOING FOOTSTEPS...
I--HUNGER, DRACULA.
WE SHALL FEAST SOON, DEAR LENORE.

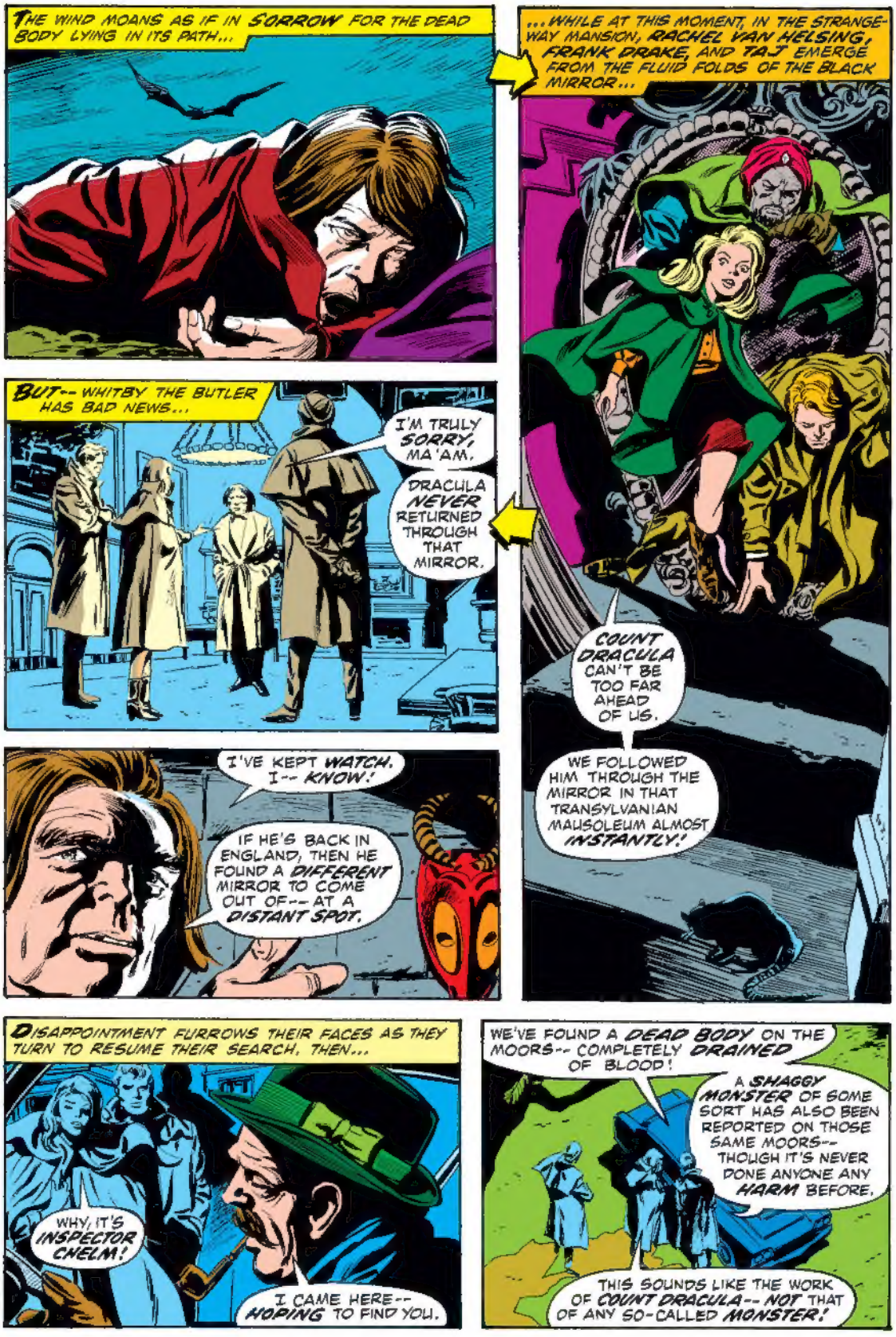

MISTS ENSHROUD THOSE VAMPIRIC SHAPES AS THEY PICK A PATH ACROSS VAST MOORLANDS...

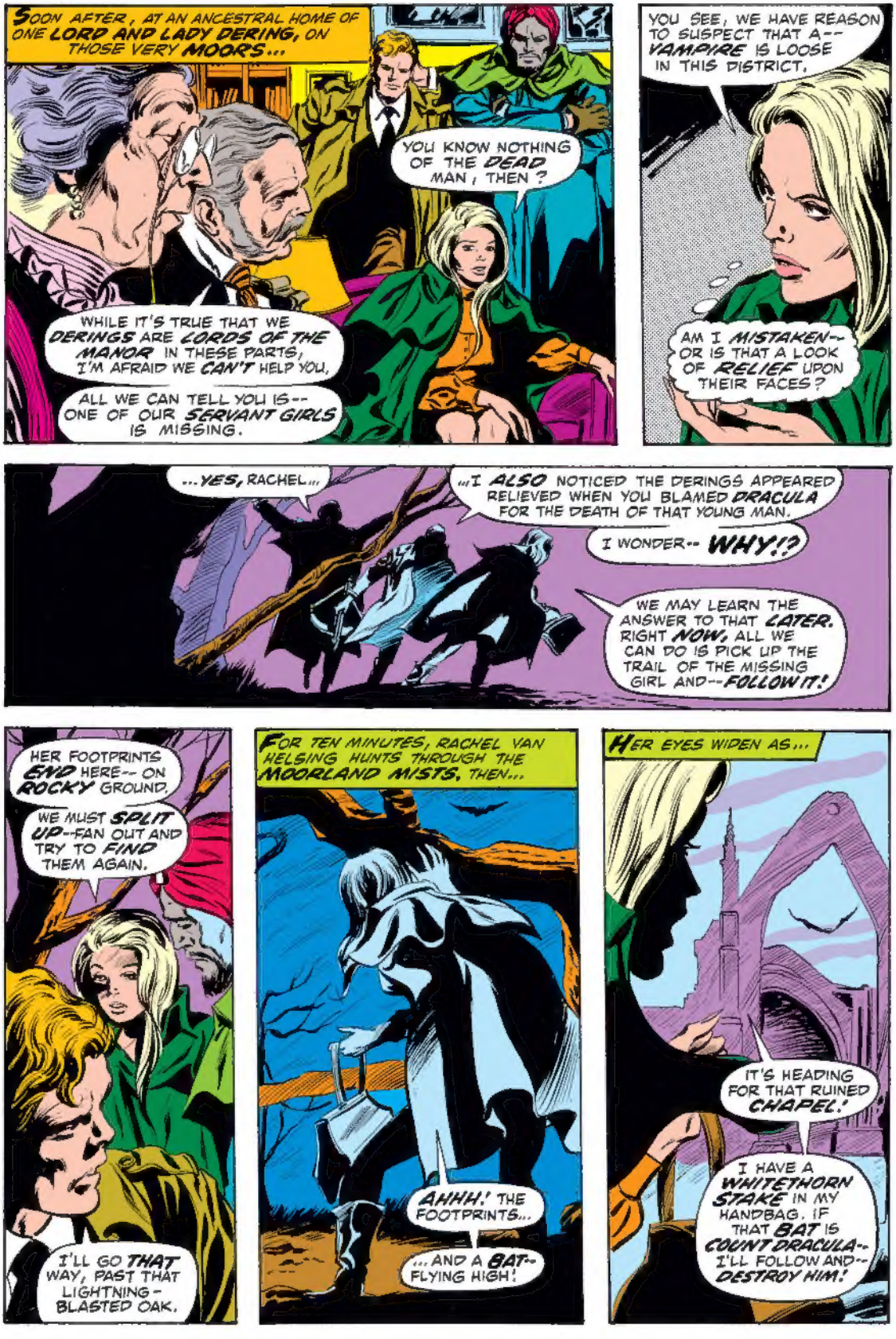
LET US SEPARATE FOR BETTER-- HUNTING!
GO YOUR WAY, LENORE-- AS I GO MINE.

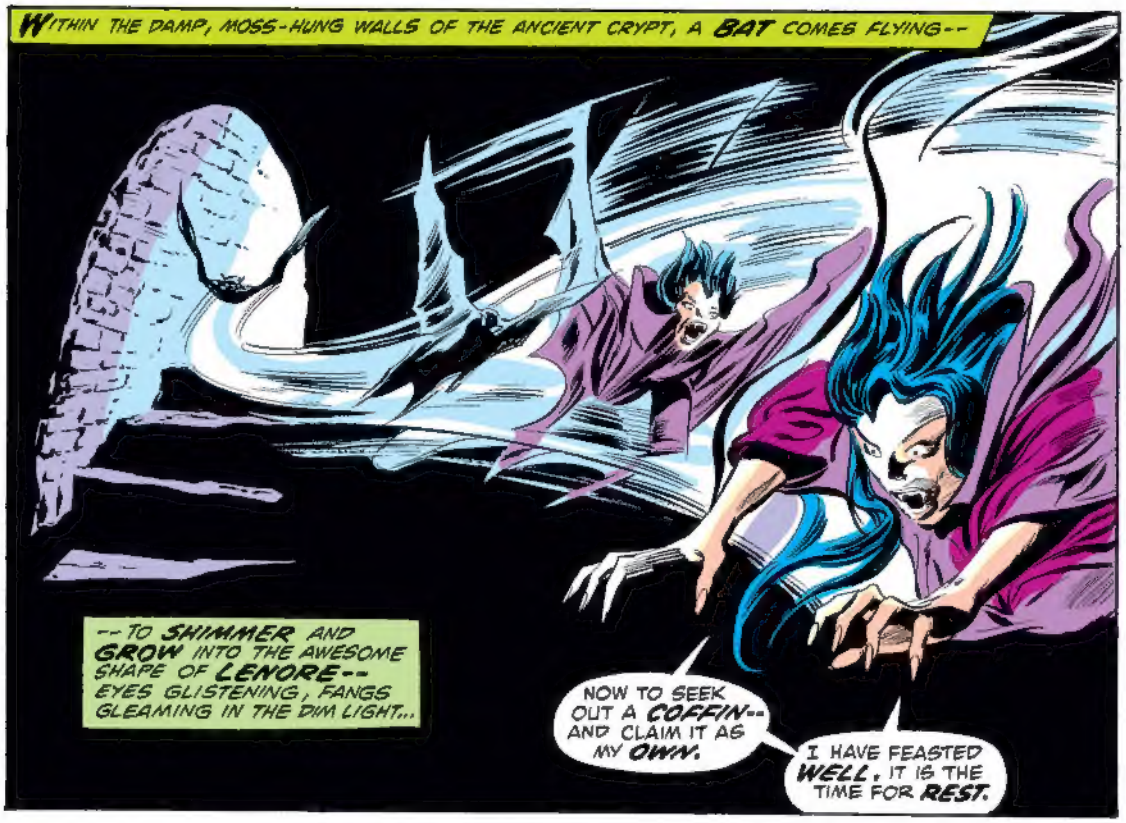

SOON, ONLY THE LEATHERY FLAP OF BATWINGS TELLS WHERE THE UNDEAD HUNT THEIR PREY...


NOT FAR AWAY, A SERVANT-GIRL PAUSES...
WHAT'S THAT? A--A LARGE BAT-- FLYING TOWARD ME--!?
OH NO-- NO!
NOW, IT'S CHANGING-- CHANGING INTO A MAN, AND--
AAAAAAEEEEEE
NO HUMAN EAR HEARS THAT TERRIFIED SCREAM! NO HUMAN VOICE ANSWERS ITS AGONIZED APPEAL...!
NOW TO RETURN TO THAT ANCIENT CHAPEL CRYPT FOR A LONG SLEEP--BEFORE THE BREAK OF ACCURSED DAWN.
BEHIND HIS CLOAKED FIGURE, HE LEAVES ONLY-- DEATH...!
AND THEN...
SOBS RISE INTO THE MISTS FROM THE GREAT HAIRY THING THAT CROUCHES, GRIEVING...

FOOD... MUST EAT..!
THEN, HAVING FEASTED, THE MOORLANDS MONSTER LIFTS A LIMP BURDEN AND STALKS OFF THROUGH THE THICK MISTS...
HIDE HER... GOT TO HIDE HER... HIDE...HIDE!
...TOWARD ITS LAIR IN THE RUINED CHAPEL...
IN A NEARBY VILLAGE, THE SHADOW OF A HUNTING BAT HOVERS OVER...
...AN UNSUSPECTING YOUNG MAN HEADING HOMEWARD FROM THE LOCAL PUB...
TERROR ETCHES HARD LINES IN HIS FACE AS HE SIGHTS THE BARED FANGS AND SLAVERING LIPS OF-- THE FEMALE VAMPIRE!...
NOOOOOO...


THE WIND MOANS AS IF IN SORROW FOR THE DEAD BODY LYING IN ITS PATH...
...WHILE AT THIS MOMENT, IN THE STRANGE-WAY MANSION, RACHEL VAN HELSING, FRANK DRAKE, AND TAJ EMERGE FROM THE FLUID FOLDS OF THE BLACK MIRROR...
BUT-- WHITBY THE BUTLER HAS BAD NEWS...
I'M TRULY SORRY, MA'AM.
DRACULA NEVER RETURNED THROUGH THAT MIRROR.
COUNT DRACULA CAN'T BE TOO FAR AHEAD OF US.
WE FOLLOWED HIM THROUGH THE MIRROR IN THAT TRANSYLVANIAN MAUSOLEUM ALMOST INSTANTLY!
I'VE KEPT WATCH. I-- KNOW!
IF HE'S BACK IN ENGLAND, THEN HE FOUND A DIFFERENT MIRROR TO COME OUT OF-- AT A DISTANT SPOT.
DISAPPOINTMENT FURROWS THEIR FACES AS THEY TURN TO RESUME THEIR SEARCH. THEN...
WHY, IT'S INSPECTOR CHELM!
I CAME HERE-- HOPING TO FIND YOU.
WE'VE FOUND A DEAD BODY ON THE MOORS-- COMPLETELY DRAINED OF BLOOD!
A SHAGGY MONSTER OF SOME SORT HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED ON THOSE SAME MOORS-- THOUGH IT'S NEVER DONE ANYONE ANY HARM BEFORE.
THIS SOUNDS LIKE THE WORK OF COUNT DRACULA-- NOT THAT OF ANY SO-CALLED MONSTER!

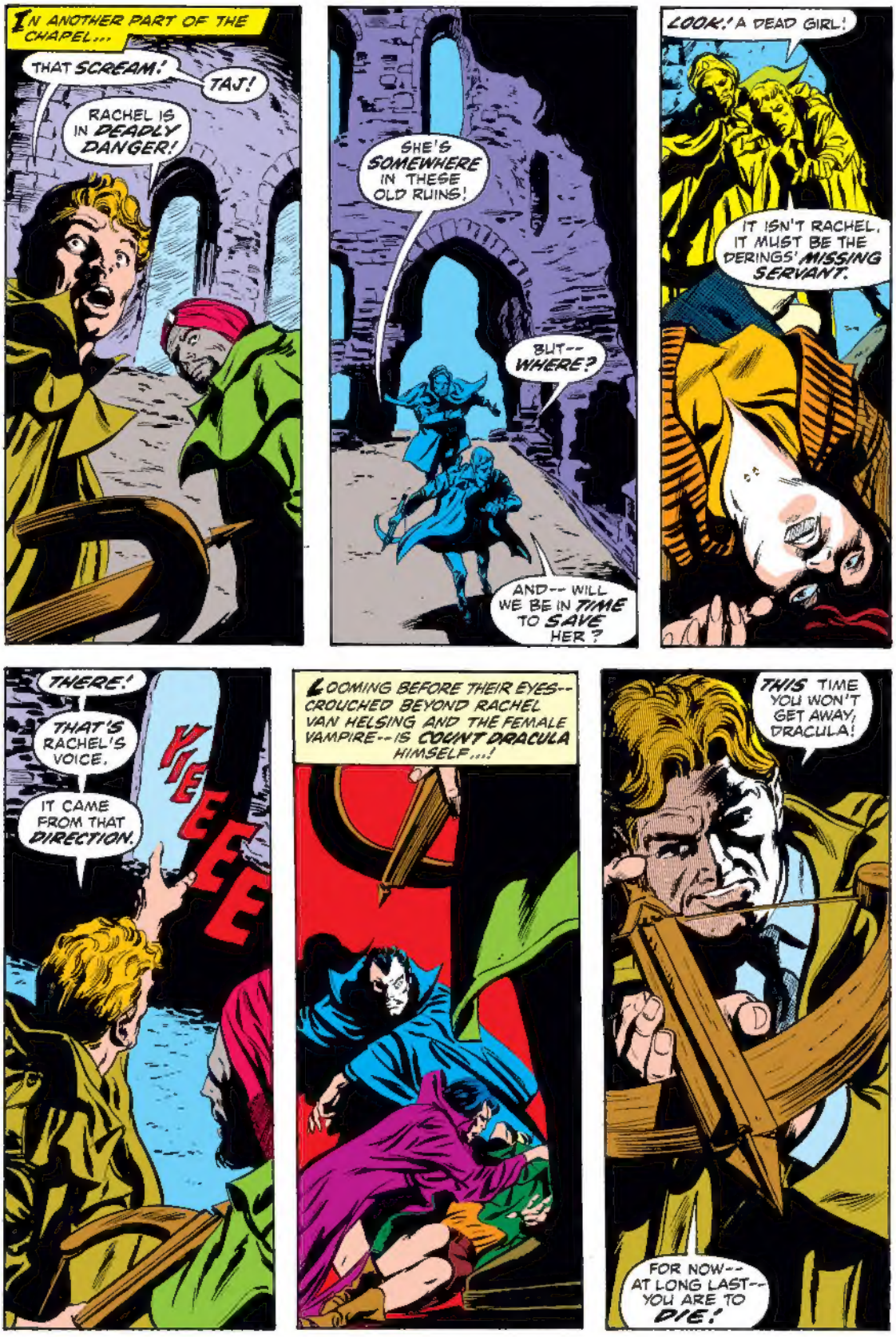

SOON AFTER, AT AN ANCESTRAL HOME OF ONE LORD AND LADY DERING, ON THOSE VERY MOORS...
YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THE DEAD MAN, THEN?
WHILE IT'S TRUE THAT WE DERINGS ARE LORDS OF THE MANOR IN THESE PARTS, I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T HELP YOU.
ALL WE CAN TELL YOU IS-- ONE OF OUR SERVANT GIRLS IS MISSING.
YOU SEE, WE HAVE REASON TO SUSPECT THAT A-- VAMPIRE IS LOOSE IN THIS DISTRICT.
AM I MISTAKEN-- OR IS THAT A LOOK OF RELIEF UPON THEIR FACES?
...YES, RACHEL...
"I ALSO NOTICED THE DERINGS APPEARED RELIEVED WHEN YOU BLAMED DRACULA FOR THE DEATH OF THAT YOUNG MAN.
I WONDER-- WHY!?
WE MAY LEARN THE ANSWER TO THAT LATER. RIGHT NOW, ALL WE CAN DO IS PICK UP THE TRAIL OF THE MISSING GIRL AND--FOLLOW IT!
HER FOOTPRINTS END HERE-- ON ROCKY GROUND.
WE MUST SPLIT UP--FAN OUT AND TRY TO FIND THEM AGAIN.
I'LL GO THAT WAY, PAST THAT LIGHTNING-BLASTED OAK.
FOR TEN MINUTES, RACHEL VAN HELSING HUNTS THROUGH THE MOORLAND MISTS. THEN...
AHHH! THE FOOTPRINTS...
...AND A BAT-- FLYING HIGH!
HER EYES WIDEN AS...
IT'S HEADING FOR THAT RUINED CHAPEL!
I HAVE A WHITETHORN STAKE IN MY HANDBAG. IF THAT BAT IS COUNT DRACULA-- I'LL FOLLOW AND-- DESTROY HIM!

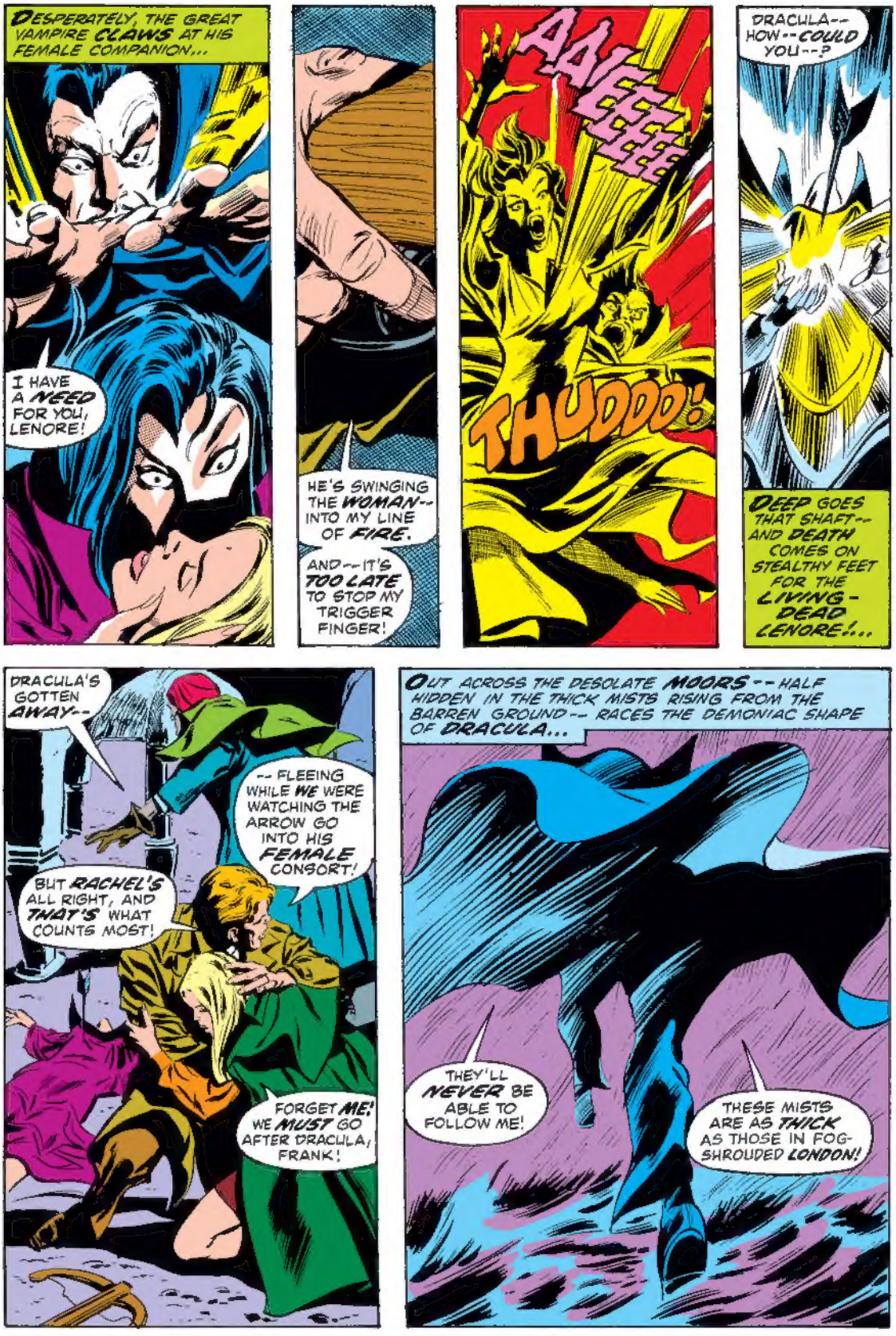

WITHIN THE DAMP, MOSS-HUNG WALLS OF THE ANCIENT CRYPT, A BAT COMES FLYING--
-- TO SHIMMER AND GROW INTO THE AWESOME SHAPE OF LENORE-- EYES GLISTENING, FANGS GLEAMING IN THE DIM LIGHT...
NOW TO SEEK OUT A COFFIN-- AND CLAIM IT AS MY OWN.
I HAVE FEASTED WELL. IT IS THE TIME FOR REST.

HOLLOW FOOTFALLS ALERT HER TO THE THREAT...
WHAT'S THIS?
A WOMAN-- FOLLOWING ME!

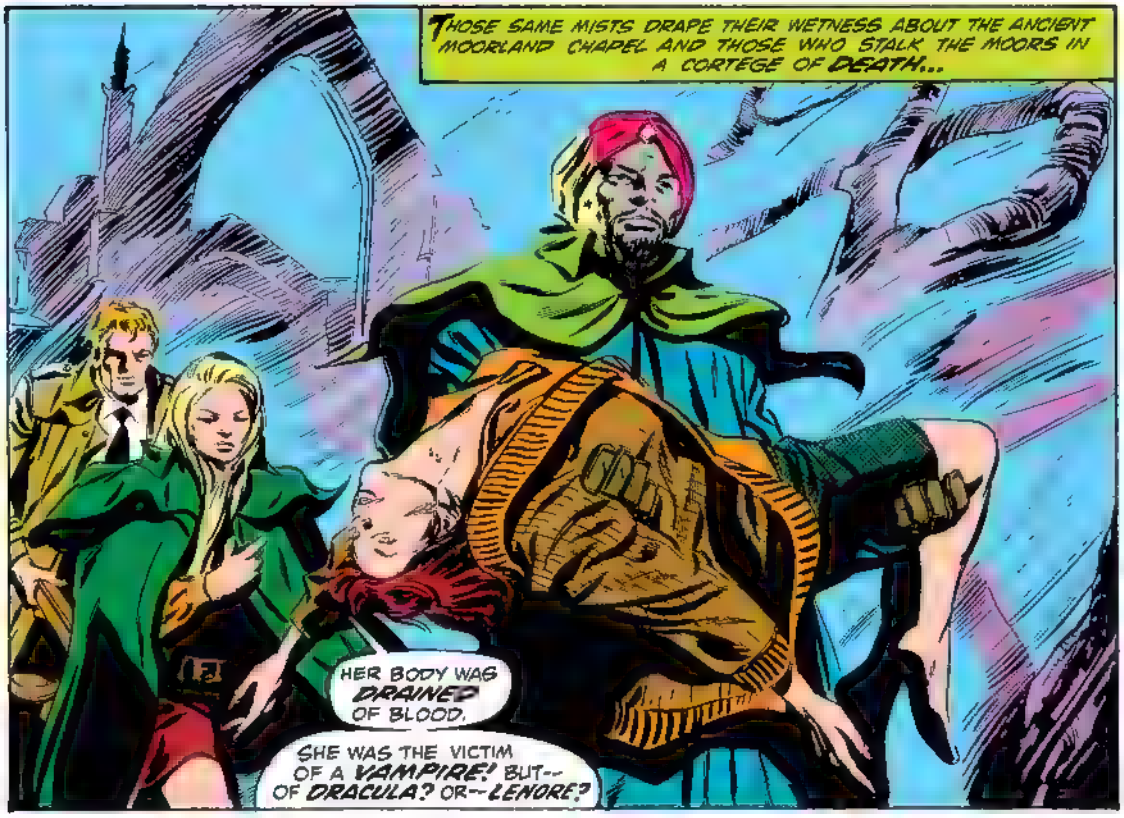
OHHH-- NO!
THE WHITETHORN STAKE-- CAUGHT IN MY HANDBAG!

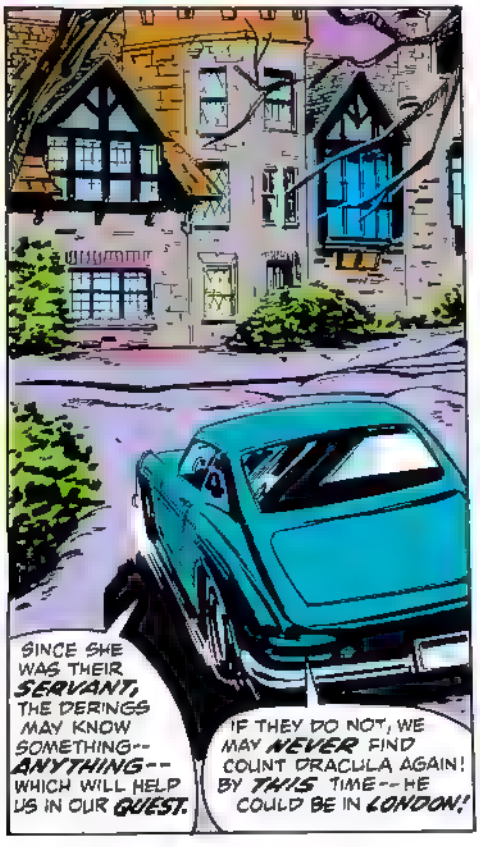
YIEEEEEEEE

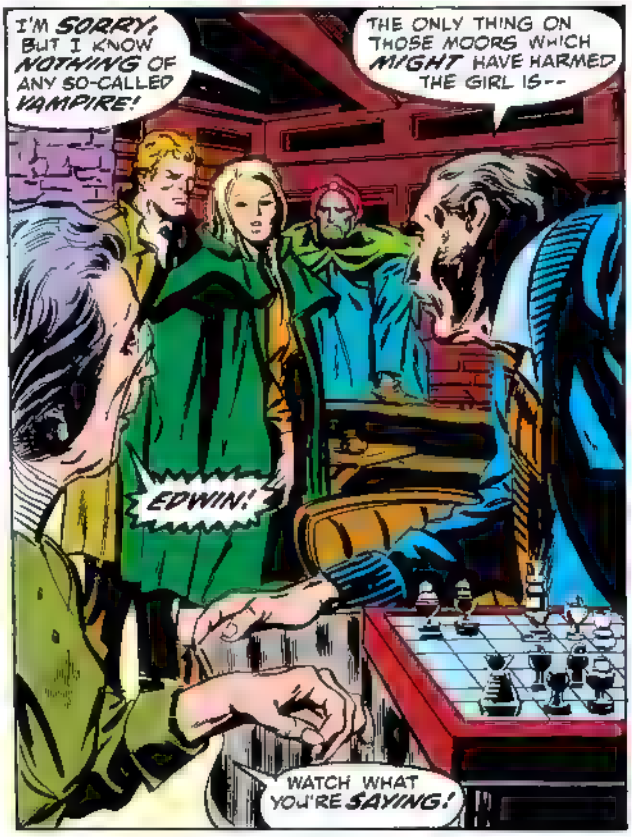

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE CHAPEL...
THAT SCREAM!
TAJ!
RACHEL IS IN DEADLY DANGER!
SHE'S SOMEWHERE IN THESE OLD RUINS!
BUT-- WHERE?
AND-- WILL WE BE IN TIME TO SAVE HER?
LOOK! A DEAD GIRL!
IT ISN'T RACHEL. IT MUST BE THE DERINGS' MISSING SERVANT.
THERE!
THAT'S RACHEL'S VOICE.
IT CAME FROM THAT DIRECTION.
YEEEE
LOOMING BEFORE THEIR EYES-- CROUCHED BEYOND RACHEL VAN HELSING AND THE FEMALE VAMPIRE-- IS COUNT DRACULA HIMSELF...!
THIS TIME YOU WON'T GET AWAY, DRACULA!
FOR NOW-- AT LONG LAST-- YOU ARE TO DIE!

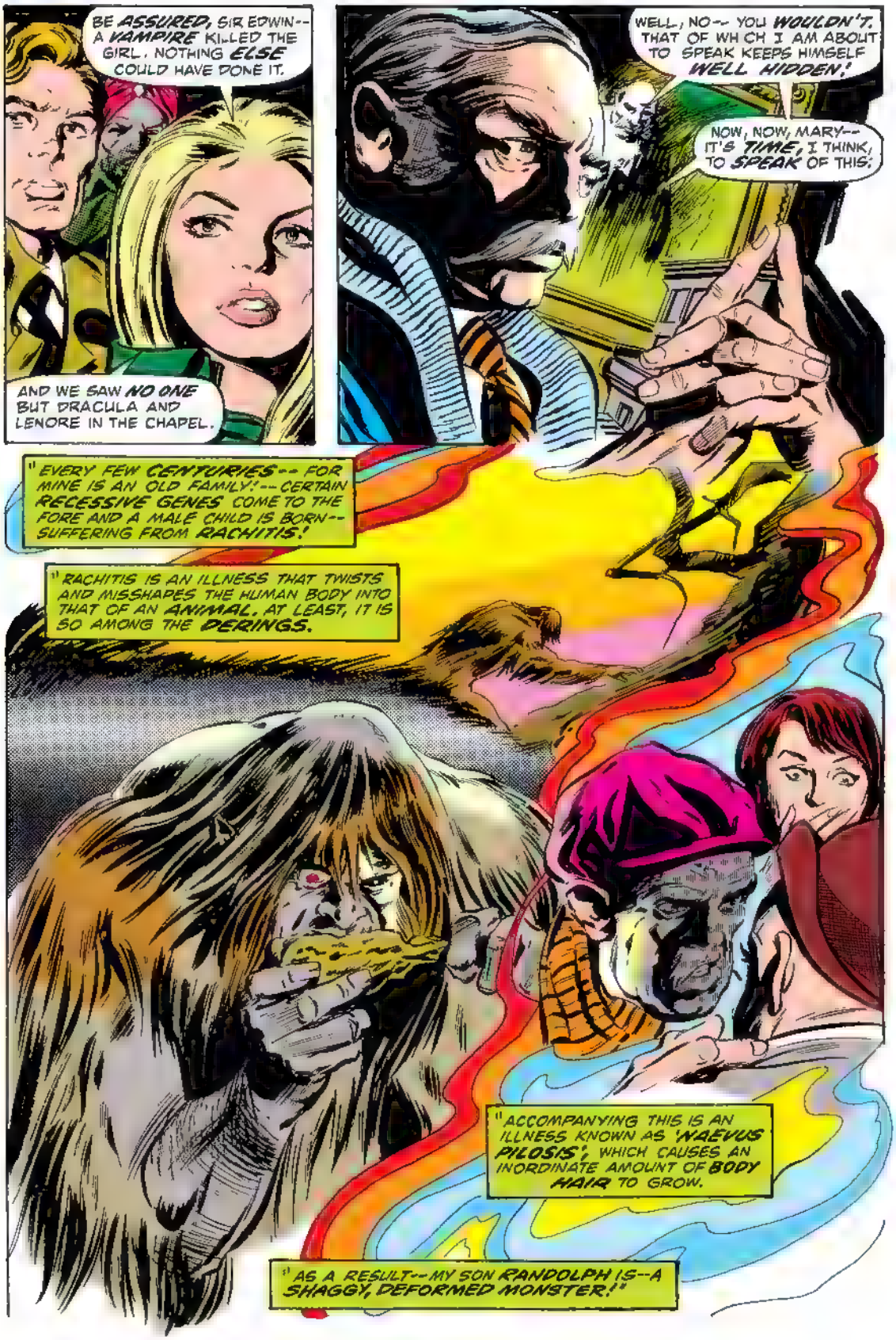

DESPERATELY, THE GREAT VAMPIRE CLAWS AT HIS FEMALE COMPANION...
I HAVE A NEED FOR YOU, LENORE!
HE'S SWINGING THE WOMAN-- INTO MY LINE OF FIRE.
AND--IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP MY TRIGGER FINGER!
AAIEEEE!
THUDDD!
DRACULA-- HOW--COULD YOU--?
DEEP GOES THAT SHAFT-- AND DEATH COMES ON STEALTHY FEET FOR THE LIVING-DEAD LENORE!...
DRACULA'S GOTTEN AWAY--
-- FLEEING WHILE WE WERE WATCHING THE ARROW GO INTO HIS FEMALE CONSORT!
BUT RACHEL'S ALL RIGHT, AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS MOST!
FORGET ME! WE MUST GO AFTER DRACULA, FRANK!
OUT ACROSS THE DESOLATE MOORS -- HALF HIDDEN IN THE THICK MISTS RISING FROM THE BARREN GROUND -- RACES THE DEMONIAC SHAPE OF DRACULA...
THEY'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FOLLOW ME!
THESE MISTS ARE AS THICK AS THOSE IN FOG-SHROUDED LONDON!

RAW RED FURY BURNS IN THE HEART OF THE MASTER VAMPIRE, AS HE CRASHES A PATH THROUGH THE ROTTING BRANCHES OF LONG-DEAD TREES...
THOSE THREE HAVE LIVED TOO LONG!
THEY HAVE BEGUN TO-- ANNOY ME!
EVEN SO--I MUST FIND A WAY TO DISPOSE OF RACHEL VAN HELSING-- FRANK DRAKE-- AND THEIR MUTE SERVANT, TAJ.
FROM MY RESEARCHES, I HAVE LEARNED OF A PLACE NEAR HERE-- FROM WHICH THERE CAN BE NO ESCAPE!
IT IS THE PERFECT-- DEATH TRAP!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LET THEM FOLLOW ME-- TO IT!
BUT-- THE COWLED FIGURE IS UNAWARE THAT ANOTHER FOLLOWS HIS GHOSTLY PATH ACROSS THE MOORS...
CRACK!
HOT EYES BLAZE WITH HATE. MASSIVE MUSCLES FLEX IN THE LUST TO SLAY, UNDER A HAIRY HIDE. THEN THE MISTS SWIRL IN AND HIDE THESE TWO AWESOME SHAPES...

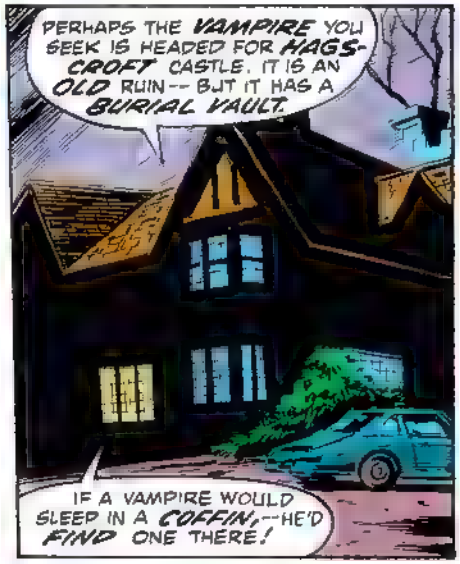

THOSE SAME MISTS DRAPE THEIR WETNESS ABOUT THE ANCIENT MOORLAND CHAPEL AND THOSE WHO STALK THE MOORS IN A CORTEGE OF DEATH...
HER BODY WAS DRAINED OF BLOOD.
SHE WAS THE VICTIM OF A VAMPIRE! BUT-- OF DRACULA? OR--LENORE?

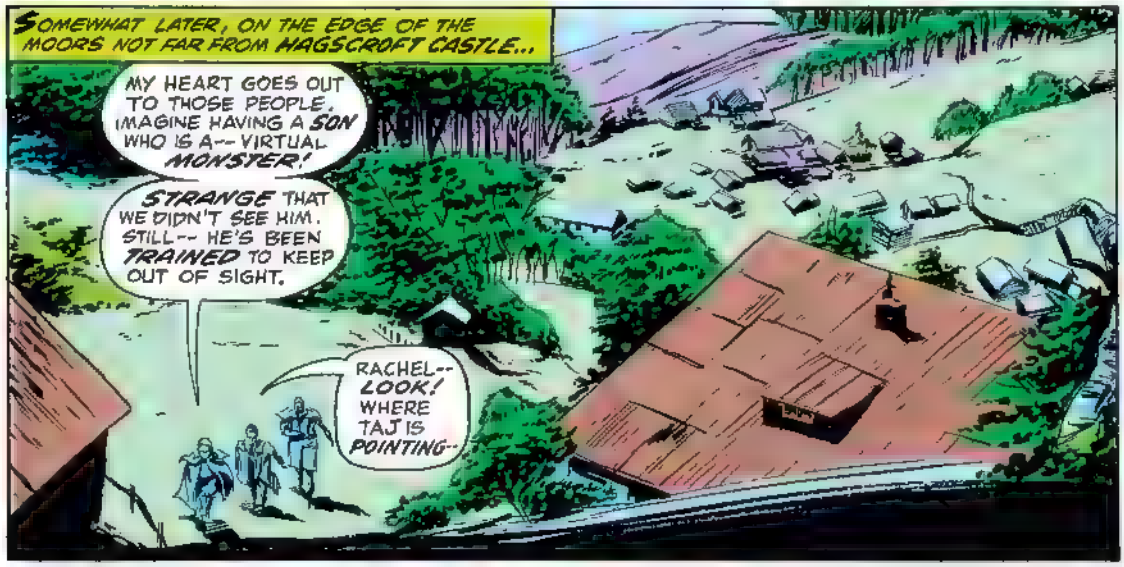

SINCE SHE WAS THEIR SERVANT, THE DERINGS MAY KNOW SOMETHING-- ANYTHING-- WHICH WILL HELP US IN OUR QUEST.
IF THEY DO NOT, WE MAY NEVER FIND COUNT DRACULA AGAIN! BY THIS TIME--HE COULD BE IN LONDON!


I'M SORRY, BUT I KNOW NOTHING OF ANY SO-CALLED VAMPIRE!
THE ONLY THING ON THOSE MOORS WHICH MIGHT HAVE HARMED THE GIRL IS--
EDWIN!
WATCH WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!


BE ASSURED, SIR EDWIN--A VAMPIRE KILLED THE GIRL. NOTHING ELSE COULD HAVE DONE IT.
AND WE SAW NO ONE BUT DRACULA AND LENORE IN THE CHAPEL.
WELL, NO -- YOU WOULDN'T. THAT OF WH CH I AM ABOUT TO SPEAK KEEPS HIMSELF WELL HIDDEN!
NOW, NOW, MARY--IT'S TIME, I THINK, TO SPEAK OF THIS:
"EVERY FEW CENTURIES -- FOR MINE IS AN OLD FAMILY! -- CERTAIN RECESSIVE GENES COME TO THE FORE AND A MALE CHILD IS BORN -- SUFFERING FROM RACHITIS!
"RACHITIS IS AN ILLNESS THAT TWISTS AND MISSHAPES THE HUMAN BODY INTO THAT OF AN ANIMAL. AT LEAST, IT IS SO AMONG THE DERINGS.
"ACCOMPANYING THIS IS AN ILLNESS KNOWN AS 'NAEVUS PILOSIS', WHICH CAUSES AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF BODY HAIR TO GROW.
"AS A RESULT -- MY SON RANDOLPH IS -- A SHAGGY, DEFORMED MONSTER!"

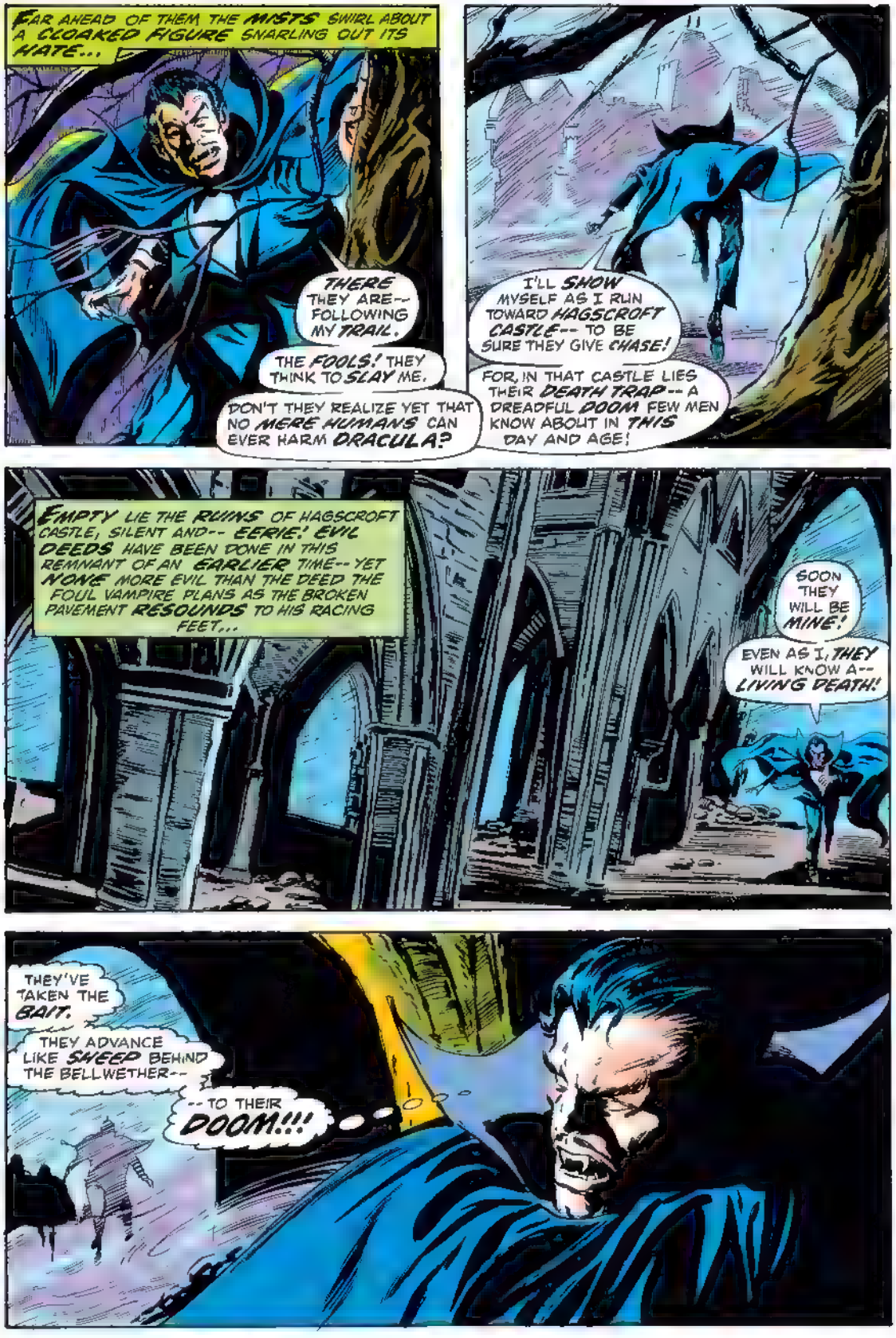
WE HID HIM IN THE RUINED CHAPEL-- AND SENT A GIRL EACH DAY TO FEED HIM!
HE LIKED THAT GIRL. HE WOULD NEVER HAVE HARMED HER.


PERHAPS THE VAMPIRE YOU SEEK IS HEADED FOR HAGSCROFT CASTLE. IT IS AN OLD RUIN-- BUT IT HAS A BURIAL VAULT.
IF A VAMPIRE WOULD SLEEP IN A COFFIN,--HE'D FIND ONE THERE!

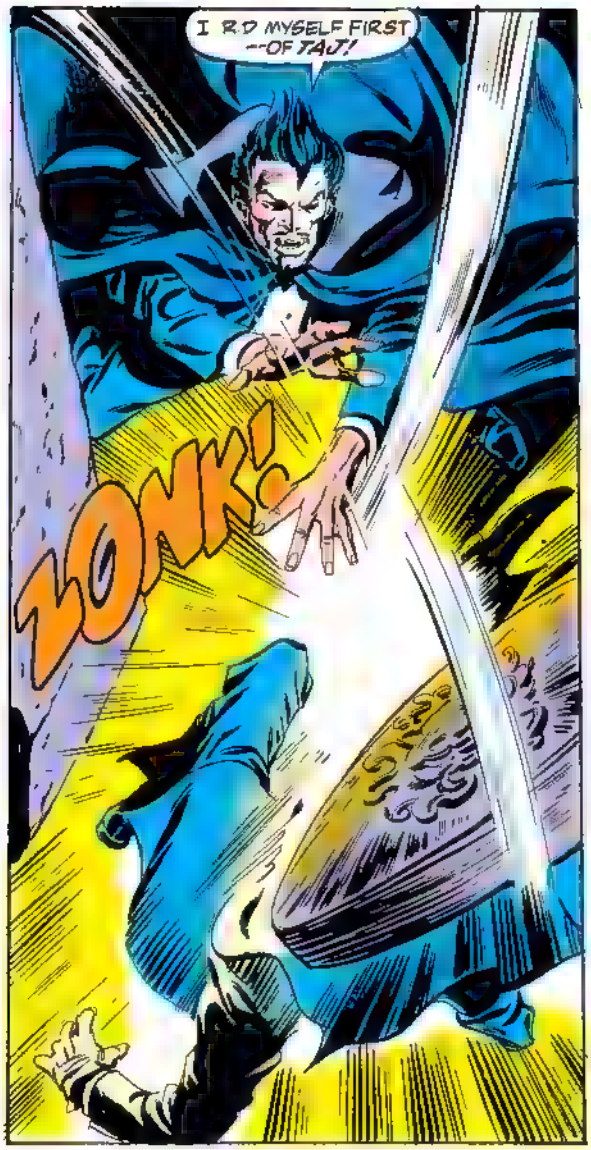

SOMEWHAT LATER, ON THE EDGE OF THE MOORS NOT FAR FROM HAGSCROFT CASTLE...
MY HEART GOES OUT TO THOSE PEOPLE, IMAGINE HAVING A SON WHO IS A-- VIRTUAL MONSTER!
STRANGE THAT WE DIDN'T SEE HIM. STILL-- HE'S BEEN TRAINED TO KEEP OUT OF SIGHT.
RACHEL-- LOOK! WHERE TAJ IS POINTING--

SIR EDWIN WAS RIGHT!
TAJ HAS FOUND DRACULA'S FOOTPRINTS-- HEADING NORTH!

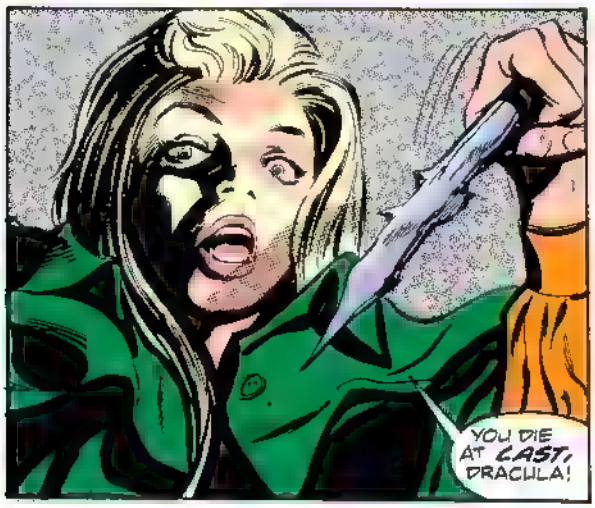
AND THERE'S HAGSCROFT CASTLE YONDER. THE MISTS GROW THICKER-- ALMOST HIDING IT FROM VIEW.
WE'D BEST HURRY!


FAR AHEAD OF THEM THE MISTS SWIRL ABOUT A CLOAKED FIGURE SNARLING OUT ITS HATE...
THERE THEY ARE-- FOLLOWING MY TRAIL.
THE FOOLS! THEY THINK TO SLAY ME.
DON'T THEY REALIZE YET THAT NO MERE HUMANS CAN EVER HARM DRACULA?
I'LL SHOW MYSELF AS I RUN TOWARD HAGSCROFT CASTLE-- TO BE SURE THEY GIVE CHASE!
FOR, IN THAT CASTLE LIES THEIR DEATH TRAP-- A DREADFUL DOOM FEW MEN KNOW ABOUT IN THIS DAY AND AGE!
EMPTY LIE THE RUINS OF HAGSCROFT CASTLE, SILENT AND-- EERIE! EVIL DEEDS HAVE BEEN DONE IN THIS REMNANT OF AN EARLIER TIME-- YET NONE MORE EVIL THAN THE DEED THE FOUL VAMPIRE PLANS AS THE BROKEN PAVEMENT RESOUNDS TO HIS RACING FEET...
SOON THEY WILL BE MINE!
EVEN AS I, THEY WILL KNOW A-- LIVING DEATH!
THEY'VE TAKEN THE BAIT.
THEY ADVANCE LIKE SHEEP BEHIND THE BELLWETHER--
-- TO THEIR DOOM!!!

AFTER HIM COMES THE TRAILING TRIO-- DEEPER, YET EVER DEEPER INTO THE GROINED VAULTS AND STONE CRYPTS OF THIS ANCIENT CASTLE-- AWED BY ITS UNCANNY STILLNESS AND THE MENACE OF DARK SHADOWS ALL ABOUT THEM...
WALK WARILY, TAJ!
DON'T MAKE A SINGLE FALSE MOVE!
NO ECHO SOUNDS, NO FAINT WHISPER OF A BREEZE NOR CHITTERING OF RAT ANSWERS THEIR STRAINING EARS, IT IS AS IF THIS DESOLATE WASTE WERE DESERTED...
CAREFUL, TAJ!
THEY FAIL TO SEE THE GRIM SHAPE CROUCHED AND WAITING, MERGING WITH THE SHADOWS...
THEY'RE HEADING THIS WAY.
IT'S TIME NOW TO PREPARE MY LITTLE-- SURPRISE!
MIGHTY HANDS FASTEN ON A CARVED IRON COVER, MASSIVE MUSCLES BULGE, LIFT IT UPWARD...
ONLY I POSSESS THE STRENGTH TO RAISE THIS LID!
MY DEATH-TRAP YAWNS-- AWAITING ITS VICTIMS!

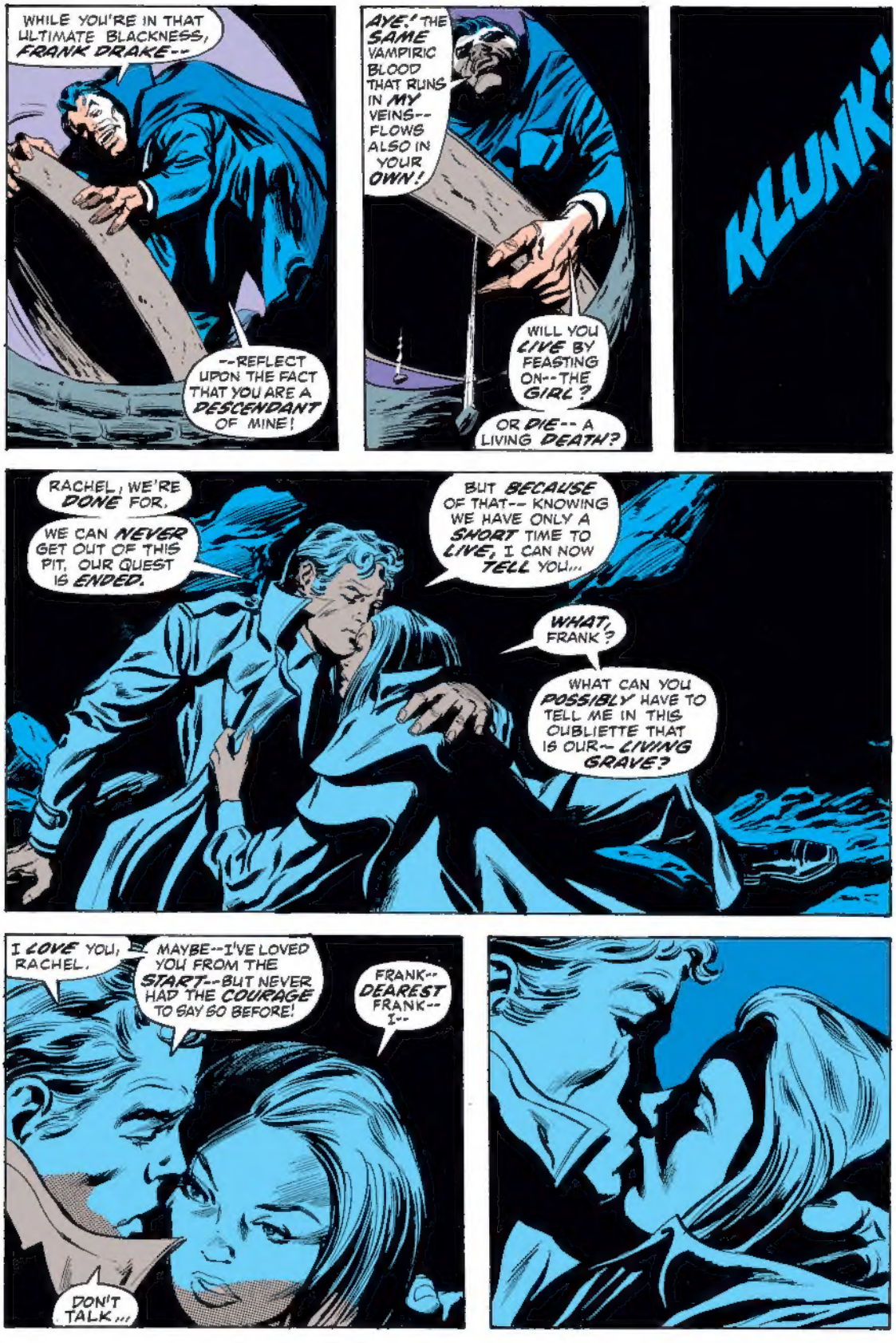

I RD MYSELF FIRST --OF TAJ!
ZONK!

A FIST LIKE A STONE BLOCK PILEDRIVES A PATH THROUGH THE AIR...
AND NOW FOR YOU, FRANK DRAKE!
THIS IS MY CHANCE--
--IF ONLY THE WHITETHORN STICK COMES FREE!

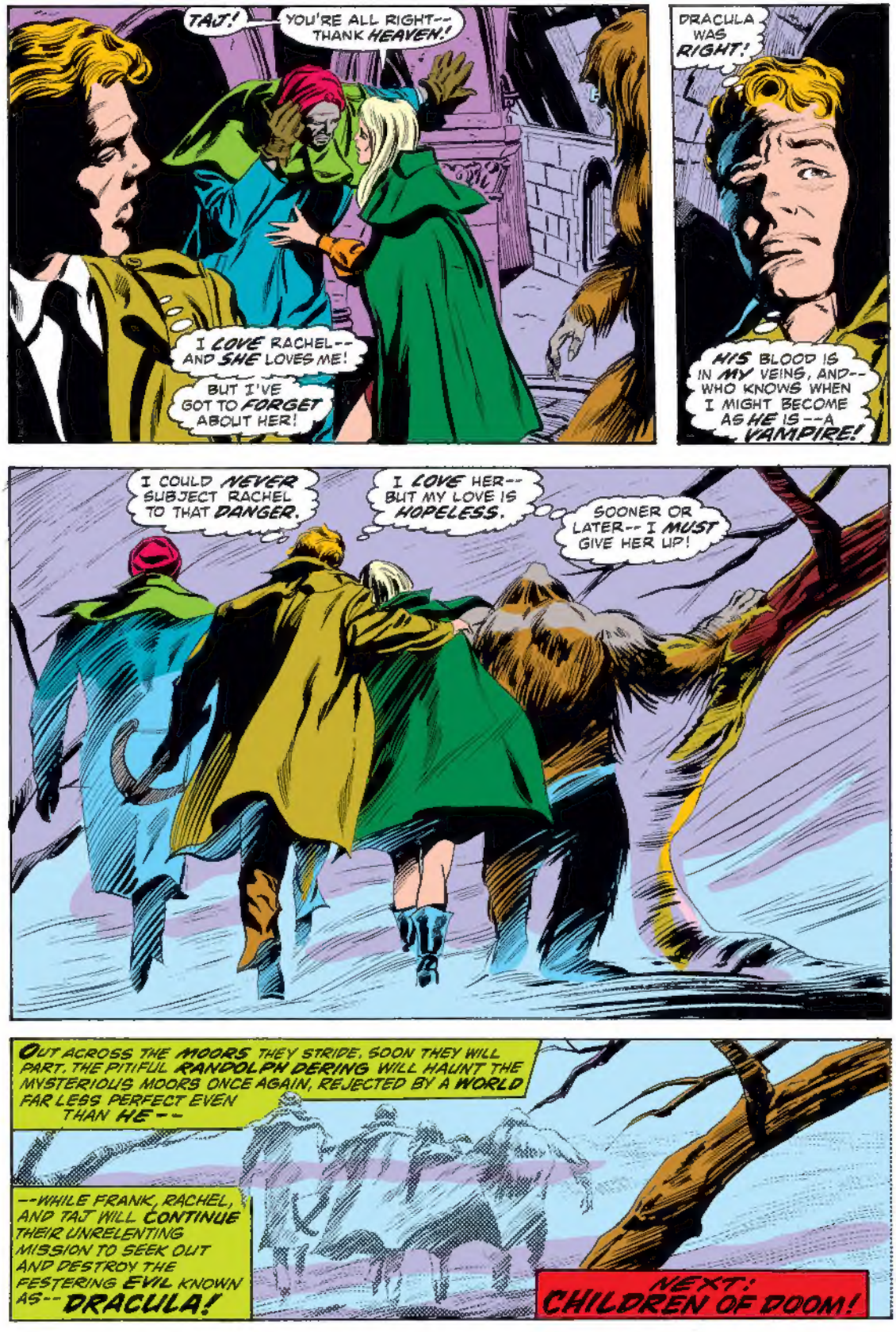

YOU DIE AT LAST, DRACULA!

LET GO OF THAT STICK, YOU LITTLE FOOL!
AGAINST DRACULA, YOU ARE-- POWERLESS!

TOWARD A BLACK, GAPING HOLE HE DRAGS HIS VICTIMS...
AT LONG LAST-- I'M FOREVER RID OF YOU!
THERE SHALL YOU LIE-- UNTIL STARVATION AND THIRST-- AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR AWFUL FATE-- STEALS YOUR VERY SANITY!
ONCE THAT MASSIVE COVER IS PUT IN PLACE, RACHEL VAN HELSING AND FRANK DRAKE WILL LIVE-- FOR A LITTLE WHILE-- IN ABSOLUTE AND UTTER DARKNESS--WITHOUT HOPE, WITH ONLY DESPAIR AS THEIR COMPANION...
DOWNWARD HE DROPS HIS UNCONSCIOUS PREY-- DOWNWARD INTO ETERNAL IMPRISONMENT, INTO THE DAMP DARKNESS FROM WHICH THERE IS NO ESCAPE! FOR THIS ROCK-WALLED CHAMBER IS AN OUBLIETTE, WHERE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES THE LORDS OF THE CASTLE TOSSED THEIR ENEMIES-- TO DIE A SLOW, LINGERING DEATH!...


WHILE YOU'RE IN THAT ULTIMATE BLACKNESS, FRANK DRAKE--
--REFLECT UPON THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A DESCENDANT OF MINE!
AYE! THE SAME VAMPIRIC BLOOD THAT RUNS IN MY VEINS-- FLOWS ALSO IN YOUR OWN!
WILL YOU LIVE BY FEASTING ON--THE GIRL?
OR DIE-- A LIVING DEATH?
KLUNK!
RACHEL, WE'RE DONE FOR.
WE CAN NEVER GET OUT OF THIS PIT. OUR QUEST IS ENDED.
BUT BECAUSE OF THAT-- KNOWING WE HAVE ONLY A SHORT TIME TO LIVE, I CAN NOW TELL YOU...
WHAT, FRANK?
WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY HAVE TO TELL ME IN THIS OUBLIETTE THAT IS OUR-- LIVING GRAVE?
I LOVE YOU, RACHEL.
MAYBE--I'VE LOVED YOU FROM THE START--BUT NEVER HAD THE COURAGE TO SAY SO BEFORE!
FRANK-- DEAREST FRANK-- I--
DON'T TALK...

SUDDENLY-- LIGHT STABS DOWNWARD!...
RACHEL! SOMEBODY'S REMOVING THAT MAN-HOLE COVER.
HAS DRACULA HAD A CHANGE OF HEART?
NOT HE, FRANK!
THEN-- WHO?
OR-- WHAT?
NO ONE BUT DRACULA HAS THE STRENGTH TO MOVE THAT COVER--NO, NOT EVEN TAJ, STRONG AS HE IS!
A SHAGGY-- SOMETHING--CROUCHES LOW ABOVE THAT LIFE-GIVING OPENING!...
IT'S THE-- MOORLANDS MONSTER--
--YOUNG DERING!
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE!
YOU'RE GIVING FRANK AND ME A CHANCE AT A WHOLE NEW LIFE!
FOR THAT-- WE'LL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL.
POOR DEVIL!
HIS BODY MAY BE BENT AND TWISTED, RACHEL --BUT INSIDE, DESPITE EVERY-THING, HE'S STILL A-- MAN!
FRANK--HE CAN'T SPEAK CLEARLY--BUT --HIS HANDS--
HE'S TELLING US-- THANKS-- FOR CALLING HIM A MAN!


TAJ!
YOU'RE ALL RIGHT-- THANK HEAVEN!
I LOVE RACHEL-- AND SHE LOVES ME!
BUT I'VE GOT TO FORGET ABOUT HER!
DRACULA WAS RIGHT!
HIS BLOOD IS IN MY VEINS, AND-- WHO KNOWS WHEN I MIGHT BECOME AS HE IS--A VAMPIRE!
I COULD NEVER SUBJECT RACHEL TO THAT DANGER.
I LOVE HER-- BUT MY LOVE IS HOPELESS.
SOONER OR LATER-- I MUST GIVE HER UP!
OUT ACROSS THE MOORS THEY STRIDE, SOON THEY WILL PART. THE PITIFUL RANDOLPH DERING WILL HAUNT THE MYSTERIOUS MOORS ONCE AGAIN, REJECTED BY A WORLD FAR LESS PERFECT EVEN THAN HE--
--WHILE FRANK, RACHEL, AND TAJ WILL CONTINUE THEIR UNRELENTING MISSION TO SEEK OUT AND DESTROY THE FESTERING EVIL KNOWN AS-- DRACULA!
NEXT: CHILDREN OF DOOM!